
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Forests and Range
and Minister Responsible for Housing
BC Housing

PROVINCE HELPS FUND 15-BED WOMEN'S EMERGENCY SHELTER

VERNON – The Province has approved one-time funding of \$18,900 to help create a temporary emergency shelter for women until the end of March, Okanagan-Vernon MLA Tom Christensen announced today. The provincial funding through BC Housing will provide for overnight staffing at the shelter.

“A lot of people in the community have pulled together and made commitments to make sure a women’s shelter in Vernon has the proper resources and support,” said Christensen. “That’s why the Province has no hesitation in doing our part to make it a reality.”

The operation of the 15-bed shelter will be organized by the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) – Vernon Branch. The shelter will be located at the CMHA’s club house facility at 3610 25th Avenue and plans to open as soon as staffing is in place.

“We’ve checked with the people involved with our programs at the club house and they fully support moving the programs to accommodate the shelter,” said Sandy Rysen, CMHA – Vernon executive director. “Paid staff will be assisted by volunteers who we will train and pair with staff to make sure women have a safe, secure place to spend the night.”

“So many people have worked so hard for so long to get a dedicated women’s shelter up and running, and they should take pride in this,” said Annette Sharkey, executive director of the Social Planning Council. “The key now is to work toward creating a permanent shelter for women, and we’ll do all we can to make that happen.”

The City of Vernon is also contributing to the temporary shelter, by providing \$5,000 toward the project.

“This is great example of governments and local groups coming together as partners to contribute toward the community,” said Acting Mayor Juliette Cunningham, noting that various organizations have also come forward with over \$8,000 in in-kind contributions for various supplies and other necessities. “I would also like to acknowledge the many volunteers who have come forward to make the operation of this women’s shelter a reality.”

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The shelter will open its doors at 8 p.m. and will accept women looking for a place to stay until 11 p.m., when the doors will be locked for the night. Women will be able to stay until 7 a.m. the following morning. During the day, four days a week, the Vernon Women's Centre runs a drop-in program for homeless women between 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

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